



# ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

**St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo**

**Department of Sociology and Legal Studies**

**SOC 355J 001**

**POWER AND PARENTING**

**Fall 2020**

**Class Time:** This course will meet synchronously every week on Wednesday from 2 – 4pm. It will be a virtual classroom that can be accessed through the Course LEARN website. **Attending the synchronous class is encouraged. This class will be recorded and be available for students who cannot make the synchronous time.**

Please consult this link below on privacy during recording. Here you will find information on [instructions on how to disable cameras and microphones](https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/privacy-recordings), and if desired provide a pseudonym.

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## **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Dr. Kieran Bonner.

**Office:** SJU SH 2005

**Phone:** 519-884-8111, ext. 28242

**Office Hours:** I will hold virtual office hours on Weds. 4.30 – 5.00 pm and Thursday 4.30 – 5.00 pm **or as arranged individually**. I strongly encourage you to arrange to meet virtually.

**Email:** [kmbonner@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:kmbonner@uwaterloo.ca)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course we are going to locate the topic of power and parenting within a broader concern of **the problem of the human condition**. The course will begin developing this problem by using Hannah Arendt's work in this area. The focus throughout the course will be on the problem of the tension between human finiteness and the requirements of acting in the world. Acting well (e.g., teaching, learning, governing, but especially parenting) requires both knowledge and power but, as finite beings, humans are neither all-knowing nor omnipotent. There is a fundamental and ineradicable tension between the condition of being human (finiteness) and the requirements of action (knowledge and power). The course will spend the first few weeks developing Arendt's understanding of the human condition in regards to fundamental limitations, particularly with regard to our human capacities for labor, work, action and the problem of individuality. Then we will show that in light of this analysis of the human condition, we need to rethink the meaning of power, action and parenting.

We will then proceed to address the case of parenting in order to understand what the problem

of human finiteness means for modern times. We will address different versions of parenting and different relations to parenting in terms of an interest in developing a strong relation to the tension between action and its requirements. In the process, the Socratic position of the interrelation of action, theory and ethics, will be developed. Because we are dealing with a problem of the human condition, we will also use examples of bourgeois life, technology, cultural change, etc.; along the way we will draw on the theories of Hobbes, Parsons, Giddens, Foucault, Blum and McHugh, and Gadamer. For the most part, parenting will be the case to which we will continue to return as we seek to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the solutions that the problem of human limitation collects. It will be argued that action (e.g., parenting) and self-reflection on action are best understood as ethical enterprises.

Overall, the class will proceed, as much as is possible in a virtual environment through a lecture/discussion format that seeks to develop the problem and various responses to this problem as addressed in the texts. The reflexive analysis procedure of moving from the specific (e.g., an example of a parenting practice) to the universal (e.g., historical and contemporary conceptions of power), back to the specific and back again to the universal, will be experienced throughout the course.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Because, in principle, pedagogy is privileged over contractual relations, this outline is as much a proposal as a contract. As with my other courses, the fundamental intellectual interest concerns the issue of how we collectively understand and change ourselves. In particular, we will be concerned with the problem of speaking well and acting well, both with regard to the question of parenting and with our own talk and action in class. Be prepared to have your own assumptions disturbed, to be required to question what you take for granted, and fundamentally, to think about and take responsibility for your own talk. **Because of this reflexive character, there will be times when the issues seem convoluted and the questions difficult and challenging. Thus, as with all my courses, perplexity (aporia) will be a necessary experience in this class. As a nurtured Socratic perplexity (aporia) is part of the experience of learning, you will need to be able to sustain your spirit despite at times feeling you do not know what is going on nor where the course is headed. In short, perplexity/confusion is a course objective.**

The Course will develop critical thinking on our contemporary era in the following ways.

- A. Look at the world and human affairs in new ways
- B. Understand the differences between the human capacities for labour, work, action and the kind of worlds each capacity makes possible.
- C. Understand the importance of coming to terms with the limits of human action

- D. Understand the unique socio-historical situation of contemporary parenting and its implications for power
- E. Understand an interconnection between power, wisdom and ethics
- F. Understand parenting as a case study to address and examine D and E.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS [AND OTHER REQUIRED/SUGGESTED READINGS]**

### **Readings Available on Course Reserves**

- Other Readings made available on Course Reserves
- Hannah Arendt. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (for sale through Campus Bookstore, Amazon and through Haithi on Course Reserves)
- Kieran Bonner. 1998. *Power and Parenting: A Hermeneutic of the Human Condition*. London/St. Martin Press, Inc., New York: Macmillan Press. (an e-book available through SJU library on Course Reserves)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT**

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Mid-term assessment	Oct 6	40%
Take-Home Paper/Exam	Dec. 14	40%
Online Assignment (10 Response to Readings = 10%, 10 Response to Responses = 10%)	Ongoing	20%
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Total		100%

## Online Assignments

The purpose of the online discussion assignments below is primarily to generate dialogue among the students as well as to prepare students for the lecture/class. As the main point is to encourage attempts at responding to questions on difficult readings, they are not graded for accuracy nor are they responded to by the instructor. Rather, any issues and questions they raise are addressed in the class.

### Discussion Response to Question on Readings

Over the course of the term, each student will respond to 10 questions posed online over the course of 12 weeks, ideally 5 before and 5 after the Fall Break. These responses should be approximately 200 words in length. The questions will be based on the theories, readings, concepts, as they apply to the concept of power and action as they apply to the modern situation of parenting. All 10 are worth a total of 10%. The questions will be posted by the day after the synchronous class and the **response is due Monday** (before the Wednesday synchronous class) **by 6 pm. This is a very firm deadline.** The assignment is a completion exercise and students receive 10% for completing all 10 (1% each).

### Response to Responses:

Students are also required to respond to another students' response once a week. You must do 10 responses, ideally 5 before and 5 after Fall Break and they must be a paragraph in length (80 words approximately). **These are due on the Tuesday** (before the Wednesday synchronous class) **by noon. Again, this is a very firm deadline as the discussion board closes at noon.** These are completion assignments and you will get 10% for completing all 10 responses (1% each).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Sept 9 Virtual Class 1	Introduction/Outline/Focus The Hermeneutic Approach and Arendt's The Human Condition	Reading: Power and Parenting (pp. 1- 3, 151–154) The Human Condition (vii – xx)
2	Sept. 16 Virtual Class 2	The Human Condition and the three dimensions of the Active Life: Labour, Work, Action	'The Human Condition': 1 –21
3	Sept. 23 Virtual Class 3	The Public and the Private Realm	'The Human Condition': 22 – 38
4	Sept. 30 Virtual Class 4	The Public and the Private – Rise of the Social. Discussion of Mid-Term	'The Human Condition': 38 – 58
5	Oct. 7 Virtual Class 5	Parenting: Action Vs. Role	Bonner's E Reserve Paper Mid-term
6	Oct. 14 NO CLASS	Reading Week	
7	Oct 21 Virtual Class 6	The Problem of Contemporary Parenting as a Problem of Power in the Modern Age.	'Power and Parenting': 1 – 23. (We will cover as much of this as possible.)
8	Oct. 28 Virtual Class 7	Parental Power and the human condition: A theoretic story of modern parenting: learning to live with irreversible and unpredictable consequences.	'Power and Parenting': 24- 47
9	Nov. 4 Virtual Class 8	Tragedy, Comedy and Wisdom in Parenting and Power: The challenge and choice	'Power and Parenting': 47 – 57
10	Nov. 11 Virtual Class 9	Hobbes and Modern Power: Becoming a Super Parent	'Power and Parenting': 58 – 82
11	Nov. 18 Virtual Class 10	Foucault and Bourgeois Power: The rise of method in society and in parenting	Power and Parenting': 83 – 100
12	Nov. 25 Virtual Class 11	Practical reasoning, Parenting Effectiveness Training and the Ethics of Authority	Power and Parenting': 101 – 117
13	Dec. 2 Virtual Class 12 Take Home Exam Distributed	Overview of Course. Discussion of Take-Home	

Student interest and the emerging course conversation may require the introduction of new material, spending more time with existing material or even returning to material covered earlier. The outline, therefore, is as much a proposal as a contract.

### **Attendance Policy:**

**Class Time:** This course will meet synchronously every week on Wednesday from 2 – 4 pm. It will be a virtual classroom that can be accessed through the Course LEARN website. **Attending the synchronous class is encouraged. This class will be recorded and be available for students who cannot make the synchronous time.**

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### **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

<b><i>Event</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Classes begin	Tuesday, September 8
Last day to add a class	Monday, September 21
Last day to drop, no penalty	Monday, September 28
<i>Reading Week</i> (no course activity or assignments can be due)	Saturday, October 10 – Sunday, October 18
<i>SJU/UW Holiday (Thanksgiving Day)</i>	Monday, October 12
<b>Last day to drop, receive a WD</b>	Monday, November 23
Lectures end	Monday, December 7
Last day to drop, receive a WF	Tuesday, December 8
Pre-final assessment study day	Tuesday, December 8
Final exam/assessment period	Wednesday, December 9 – Wednesday, December 23
Grades due period	Tuesday, December 8 – Monday, January 4
Grades due, if final assessment	7 days after final assessment
Grades due, if no final assessment	Wednesday, December 23

### **POLICY ON LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, AND MAKE-UP TESTS**

Late Penalty on graded assessments - 3% (out of 100%) per day past due date including weekends

### **RULES FOR GROUP WORK IN ASSIGNMENTS**

N/A

## ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

N/A

## CORRESPONDENCE

My preference for contact is by email to the email address above. Please include the nature of the issue and your student ID in the email.

### Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or St. Jerome's University. Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

**Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA, and/or St. Jerome's University for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).**

**Permission from an instructor, TA, or the University** is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION [REQUIRED LANGUAGE APPROVED BY SJU SENATE COUNCIL]

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/) for more information.]

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances, [www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload\\_file/PLCY\\_AOM\\_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances\\_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St.

Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline, [www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY\\_AOM\\_Student-Discipline\\_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals, [www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY\\_AOM\\_Student-Appeals\\_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf).

**Note for students with disabilities:** AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, [www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/).